

Serial No. 10/038/973
Response to Office Action of 11/25/2003

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented) An absorbent article as recited in claim ~~26~~³, wherein the slit further provides a placement enhancement means which minimizes the surface area of that portion of the absorbent article that comes into contact with the floor of the vestibule.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the slit is a single continuous slit.

4. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ~~3~~⁴, wherein the slit extends at least about 80 percent of the length of the absorbent.

5. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ~~3~~⁴, wherein the slit extends at least about 80 percent of the width of the absorbent.

6. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the slit is a series of slits.

7. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ~~6~~⁷, wherein the slits extend at least about 80 percent of the length of the absorbent.

8. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ~~6~~⁷, wherein the slits extend at least about 80 percent of the width of the absorbent.

9. (original) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the absorbent further comprises a superabsorbent polymer.

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Claims 10 through 20 (canceled).

¹¹
21. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹~~28~~, wherein the slit is a single continuous slit.

¹²
22. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹¹~~21~~, wherein the slit extends at least about 90 percent of the length of the absorbent.

¹³
23. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹¹~~21~~, wherein the slit extends at least about 90 percent of the width of the absorbent.

¹⁴
24. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹~~28~~, wherein the slit is a series of slits.

¹⁵
25. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹⁴~~24~~, wherein the slits extend at least about 90 percent of the length of the absorbent.

¹⁶
26. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹⁴~~24~~, wherein the slits extend at least about 90 percent of the width of the absorbent.

¹⁷
27. (Previously presented) The absorbent article of claim ¹~~28~~, wherein the absorbent further comprises a superabsorbent polymer.

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28. (Currently amended) An absorbent article having a longitudinal x-axis configured to lie along a vertical plane that generally bisects a standing female wearer, a transverse y-axis which is perpendicular to the longitudinal x-axis, and a z-axis which is vertical when the x and y axes are horizontal, the absorbent article configured to provide a labial pad for disposition within the vestibule of a female wearer, the vestibule having a floor, the absorbent article comprising a fluid permeable cover, a liquid impermeable baffle and an absorbent situated between the cover and baffle, the absorbent having an upper surface, the upper surface having located thereon a slit which provides at least one fluid intake enhancement means; wherein
the absorbent has a maximum width of no greater than about 70 mm, a maximum length of no greater than about 100 mm and a maximum z-axis thickness of no greater than about 10 mm, when measured along a line parallel to the z-axis;
the slit extends through at least about 50 percent of the z-axis thickness of the absorbent; and
the slit is configured to provide an increased surface area of the absorbent to allow bodily fluids to be more rapidly absorbed into the absorbent when the absorbent article is folded along an axis lying on or parallel to a principal longitudinal axis (L) prior to for disposition within the vestibule of the wearer.

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29. (new) The absorbent article of claim 28, wherein the slit is configured to change from an initially closed position to an opened position when the absorbent article is folded for disposition within the vestibule of the wearer, such change thereby producing the increased surface area of the absorbent.